



# Internet Safety Kit

A wake-up call for  
safer surfing online  
for the young people  
in your life.

From the  
**Polly Klaas<sup>®</sup>**  
**Foundation**

Includes free  
download of  
*Wired With Wisdom*,  
an Internet safety  
program for parents  
from Web Wise Kids.  
Details inside.



## A True Story

*Names have been changed for privacy*

Tonya will never forget Thanksgiving 2004, the day she found her missing 12-year-old daughter. Four days earlier, the unthinkable happened: Tonya walked into her daughter's room that morning and found an empty bed.

But even with the joy of recovery, Tonya was just as surprised to learn how the girl went missing. Her daughter was found with a 33-year-old man, later charged with aggravated sexual assault and indecency with a child.

The two had met online, even though Tonya's daughter had no Internet access at their home. For three months, the preteen had used a neighbor's computer to converse in a chat room with the man, who promised her fun, freedom and gifts if she ran away.

Upon her return, the girl began counseling to deal with the experience, including coming to terms with how the man lied to her—about his age and his intentions.

Tonya got her daughter back, but other parents have had worse news after cases of "Internet lures" or abductions.



**The FBI says that reports of predators communicating with young people online have increased more than 6,000 percent since 1996.**

**Why? Too often, kids make it easy for them.**

**Kids post pictures and personal information on the Internet. They may think that only their friends can see it, but millions of people—including predators—can see what they post.**

**In a survey of young people 8–18, we found that:**

- **Half of teens (13–18) post personal information about themselves online.**
- **One-third of girls (13–18) have talked about sex online with someone they've never met in person.**
- **One in eight online teens has discovered an adult posing as much younger.**
- **Nearly one-third of teens have talked online about meeting in person with someone they know only from the Internet.**

**For more on the poll, visit “Internet Safety” at [www.pollyklaas.org](http://www.pollyklaas.org)**

**A word of precaution: this Internet Safety Kit contains information obtained from experienced and highly regarded sources and great care has been taken to publish reliable information. Although the suggestions contained in the Kit are helpful in developing good safety habits, neither the author nor the Polly Klaas® Foundation assumes responsibility for the validity of all materials or the consequences of their use.**

## What Can Parents Do?

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Kids will be kids. They make mistakes and take risks. Our survey is a wake up call that kids take more risks online than they would on the street. But lectures aren't enough. You need to take positive steps.

And remember it's necessary for young people to be online. They just need to do it safely.

- The most critical safeguard **is knowing what your kids do on the Internet**. Ask them to show you what they do online. Ask to see their profiles. Open communications.
- Let kids know from the beginning that **you are going to keep an eye on their Internet use**—for their safety. Keep the computer in a public room, with the screen visible. And limit online access to times parents are around.
- **Blocking and monitoring software** can be helpful, especially with younger kids who need only a few child-friendly websites. But don't rely on technical solutions. Young people can get around it as easily as borrowing a cell phone or going to a friend's house.
- **Make sure kids know they can come to you for help** if they get in over their heads on the Internet. Listen calmly and never react negatively when they are being honest.



***The most critical safeguard  
is knowing what your kids  
do on the Internet.***

Tweens, kids 8–12 take fewer risks than teens. Praise their caution. Make sure they know now that you are going to monitor their Internet use—for their own safety.

Teens, on the other hand, need to be convinced about the risks—and the need for parents to know what they are doing. Share your safety concerns. Share news stories of teens manipulated or hurt because of Internet behavior. Ask them what precautions they take.

**You need to know if kids are being smart about safety:**

- Have they posted provocative pictures?
- Have they given away their identity and location (name, school, phone)?
- Do photos give clues to their identity and location?
- If predators saw these postings, what would they see or use?

**You need to know if kids have posted something that  
could affect their future:**

- It's hard to retrieve and delete something once it is on the Internet.
- Colleges and employers look at kids' profiles on the Internet. Will a provocative photo or a blog about binge drinking affect admission or a job?



**You need to know if kids watch for signs of a predator, such as:**

- Lying, especially about age.
- Pornography.
- Attempts to alienate kids from their friends or family.
- Too-good-to-be-true gifts, including cameras and Web-cams.
- Threats or demands for secrecy.



## **Meeting an Online Buddy**

One-third of online teens talk about meeting an online “friend.” They shouldn’t, but many will. If they must, young people need to know the safe way to meet someone:

- Tell their parents.
- Take an adult.
- Meet in a public place.
- Keep it short.
- Be prepared to walk away if they’ve been lied to.

## **Google Your Child**

You may want to search the Web yourself. Searching the Internet for your child’s name is not an invasion of privacy. Millions of people can view what kids post online. Parents should, too.

## An offer from Web Wise Kids

### ***Wired With Wisdom***—an Internet safety program for parents

*Wired With Wisdom* gives busy parents practical, workable solutions to help manage your family's Internet safety, including email, personal websites, chat rooms, social networking, and instant messaging. Real life stories, videos, and interactive activities help you keep your child's Internet experiences fun, positive, and safe.

To download a **free** copy of *Wired With Wisdom*

- Order the Polly Klaas® Foundation's Internet Safety Kit at [www.PollyKlaas.org](http://www.PollyKlaas.org).
- You'll receive a link and special password to register with Web Wise Kids and download your free copy of the program.
- Offer good for limited time only.

## Resources

Here are just a few recommendations on other great resources for safety advice and tools:

- **CyberTipline** (800-843-5678): to report pornography and online enticement.
- **Net Family News** (<http://netfamilynews.org/index.shtml>): a weekly update about a wide variety of online matters.
- **Netsmartz** ([www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)): offers games and stories by teens that got into danger on the Internet.
- **Web Wise Kids** ([www.wiredwithwisdom.org](http://www.wiredwithwisdom.org)): offers *Missing* and *Mirror Image*, online games that teach Internet safety to tweens and teens.
- Your Internet service provider (**AOL**, **Yahoo**, etc.): each will have information about "blocking" and "monitoring" software.

To start the conversation about Internet safety, tear off the attached panel and share it with your child.

## Outwit the Web Predators

We know you've got to be online, but there really are dangers. You need to know how to protect yourself, your friends and your family.

Just because you've talked online doesn't mean you really KNOW someone. If you've never met, they could be some creepy adult. Here are some ways to outwit the predators.



First, be creative. Choose a user name that doesn't give away your name, age, school and gender. This goes for chats, IM and email. If you post pictures, use a drawing or edit your picture so it's not identifiable.

### Do you know the danger signs?

- **Someone a lot older talking to you.** You may be great, but why would any adult spend hours talking to someone a lot younger unless they wanted something?
- **Lies, especially about being younger.** There is no reason for adults to lie to kids about their age. None. They do it to gain your trust to lure or trick you.
- **Starting trouble.** Everybody complains to friends about their parents. But anyone driving a wedge between you and your family is trouble—and could be a predator.
- **Too good to be true.** If someone online offers something for nothing—gifts, money, credits cards, cameras, jobs, modeling opportunities—there's a catch.
- **Porn.** Predators “groom” kids for sexual advances by sending pornography, which is a crime. Tell your parents and report them to the CyberTipline.
- **Making threats.** If someone is harassing, blackmailing or threatening you (or your family), your parents have to know. Even if you made a mistake (like giving away personal information) your parents or the CyberTipline can help.
- **Personal info.** Beware of people asking lots of questions. You don't have to answer anything, especially about where you live, your name or personal stuff.





## Outwit the Web Predators

There are lots of other ways to stop Web predators in their tracks.

- Call the National CyberTipline (800-843-5678) to report child pornography and anyone trying to entice you to meet for sexual activity.
- If you're threatened in real life, don't wait for danger to show up at the door. Tell your parents and call the police.

## Meeting an Online Buddy

If you must meet an online friend in person for the first time, do it the right way:

- Tell your parents.
- Take an adult.
- Meet in a public place.
- Keep it short.
- Be prepared to walk away if you've been lied to.



## A Smart Kid Who Kept Her Cool and Took Action

**A teenage girl in Michigan got the upper hand over a low-life online.**

It started when a 32-year-old man found her MySpace profile online and emailed her, asking if she tasted as good as she looked and if he could “find out.”

Instead of communicating with the man or ignoring him, this smart teen did the right thing. She told her school’s police officer that the man creeped her out and provided all the details.

The police took things from there—and had no trouble finding the man online. When an officer pretended online to be a 14-year-old girl, the creep propositioned the pretend teen for a meeting. Now he is behind bars for stalking young girls on the Internet.

And the clever teen in Michigan says she learned a lot from her experience. She encourages other teens to not put personal information online and to tell a parent or police about anyone they think might be a predator online.



# Predator's Journal

**Even if you're careful about the information you put online, you may be surprised how easily predators can use a little information to find a lot more. Here's an example.**

Lisa uses "TallGirll" as her username in a chatroom, where she receives a nasty message from "BobsOfFun."

Smartly, she ignores it, but BobsOfFun searches the Web for other TallGirll references.

He finds that same username in an old posting on another site about handbags, where she gives her email address to another teen interested in a certain brand of purse.

The email ends with brooks-girls.edu, leading BobsOfFun to a Denver private school site.

A search on the school's site finds a picture of a fundraiser selling handbags, with a noticeably tall teen named Lisa Hammner in the caption.

A search of Hammner in Denver finds one listing, including phone and street address.

**BobsOfFun now has TallGirll's name, address, phone number, school, email, picture, and a specific interest.**



## Social Networking Websites

Social networking sites on the Web are places where anyone (adults or kids) can meet and share information about their lives. They can create profiles about their interests, post pictures and write journal entries. You have probably heard of MySpace.com, one of the Web's most popular sites.

**MySpace, and others like it, often have age limits. But kids as young as eight have lied about their age to set up profiles. And most young people don't realize that the information they post for friends can be used by predators.**

A form requesting personal information is often part of the sign up process, and kids think it's safe to fill in the boxes, especially if all their friends have done so.

This is a goldmine of information. Anyone—including predators—can search sites like MySpace by age, location, interests and even hair color.

Young people should be very careful not to post pictures or personal information predators might use to locate them or approach them. They should set their profiles to "Private" and should not accept as "Friends" anyone they do not already know in person.

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*Making America Safe for All Children*

The Polly Klaas® Foundation is a national organization committed to the recovery of missing children and the promotion of child abduction safety programs.

We work around the clock with families to help them find missing children. We distribute Child Safety Kits and Internet Safety Kits, offer volunteer opportunities to help find missing children and advocate laws like Amber Alert.

**This Internet Safety Kit is free because someone like you made a donation. Please donate so someone else can have a free kit: [www.PollyKlaas.org](http://www.PollyKlaas.org).**



*Making America Safe for All Children*

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*The Polly Klaas® Foundation is a national nonprofit that helps find missing children, prevents children from going missing in the first place, and works with policymakers to pass laws that help keep children safe.*

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